



UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

TRANSPORTATION INTERIM COMMITTEE

Utah State Senate
Utah House of Representatives

November 20, 2019

Members of Utah's Congressional Delegation

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<<City, State, Zip>>

RE: Federal Transportation Funding to the States

For years the federal government has wrestled with how to provide reliable, sustainable transportation funding to the states.

The federal "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act" significantly increased the states' flexibility to put transportation funding where it was most needed, but earmarks have constricted the states' ability to be adept in their response to emerging needs.

Great uncertainty from a series of sporadic, one-time funding bills gave way to the federal "Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act" (FAST Act), which funds transportation needs from 2016 through September 30, 2020. With no increase in the federal gas tax since 1993 and waning revenues from that tax, however, the federal government currently supplements about one-third of the federal transportation budget by diverting revenues from the general fund.

Providing the states with greater discretion to target specific transportation needs as identified by state players who are uniquely positioned to understand where to expend the funds will maximize the impact of federal transportation funding provided to the states.

To provide the states with greater discretion to target specific transportation needs, we recommend a performance and outcome-based pilot program allowing a few selected states, such as Utah, to treat all the transportation funding that comes to the state Department of Transportation as a single block grant. The state would then report to the federal government regarding its use of the funds.

Any such pilot program implemented by the federal government could be extended or made permanent based on the results and effectiveness of its implementation.

Utah is in a unique position to take part in the pilot program. The Utah state government and the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) are highly regarded for their excellent management, innovative thinking, and fiscal responsibility. UDOT will use asset management and performance management structures already in place to determine where the funds would be most effectively spent. This pilot program will enhance the predictability and reliability of

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federal transportation funds and establish control at a more local level, improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of federal transportation funding in one of the fastest growing states in the nation.

We urge you to consider these alternatives to the current means for providing federal transportation funding to the states. The state of Utah is ready to participate in a new, more effective, and greatly needed federal transportation funding process.

Sen. Wayne A. Harper
Senate Chair
Utah Transportation Interim Committee

Rep. Kay J. Christofferson
House Chair
Utah Transportation Interim Committee

